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Congress of the United States
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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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VETERANS' AFFAIRS
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HEALTH
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June 12, 2020

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20224

Commissioner Rettig,

As the newly imposed deadline for filing and paying federal taxes approaches, taxpayers are distressed, and reasonably so. Not only has this pandemic affected every facet of their lives, but for constituents in New York's 11th Congressional District who live in one of the most COVID-19-affected cities in the world, revenue streams are still dry, free in-person tax preparation resources are impossible to secure, and many have not received their federal tax refunds after filing months ago. The prospect of paying the entirety of taxes owed by July 15, or incur interest and penalties should they file an extension, is daunting. That is why I urge your agency to further extend the deadline to file and pay all federal taxes by three months to October 15, with no penalty to taxpayers for filing or paying prior to the new deadline.

As you know, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offers Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs to provide free tax help for taxpayers who qualify--unfortunately, with appointments booked until the tax deadline of July 15, many of my constituents on Staten Island and in South Brooklyn will be left without assistance once the deadline hits. This is compounded by suspended direct debit installment agreements expiring on July 15 as well. It would be a travesty to allow our most vulnerable populations to accrue penalties each month of their unpaid tax owed at the deadline, when they are already suffering financially.

We must implement this extension, because not only do taxpayers in this country sorely need it, but the needs of IRS employees must also be addressed. Our office has heard from taxpayers who did everything right, and filed their taxes early in the year in the hopes that they would quickly receive their federal tax refund--only to be met with silence from your agency, and confusion as to how to verify their tax refund status. To be clear, IRS employees are suffering an impossible workload, and the transition to telework for many of your staff was

gradual. In addition to handling Economic Impact Payments, your agency now faces loud calls to account for millions of tax refunds. I echo the calls of the National Treasury Employees Union and ask that this deadline be extended, so your agency can be better-equipped to serve the needs of our taxpayers.

The question at this point is not whether this extension can happen, or should happen, but whether or not you and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin will take this opportunity to provide relief for both our taxpayers and IRS staff. I stand at the ready to work with you to ensure that this happens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max', followed by a long, horizontal, slightly wavy line that extends to the right.

Max Rose
Member of Congress